1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P 212-C] DAILY LIFE

The food quest, as with the archers, is the primary concern of daily life among the net hunters. The net hunt is considerably more rewarding than the other form of hunt, although it probably occupies as much time. Care and maintenance of the nets are also laborious and time-consuming. Women gather not only as they accompany the hunt, but also on those days when the hunt stays behind in the camp. The children make a not inconsiderable contribution to the family food quest. A common occupation on a non-hunting day is for men and women to assist each other in the making of twine from *nkusa* vine. This twine is used primarily in the repair of hunting nets.

As with the archers, elimination takes place not far from the camp. Refuse is never carried away; it is merely thrown behind the huts. These practices not merely create an unpleasant smell after some weeks, but also attract armies of ants. The Mbuti themselves, however, keep their bodies scrupulously clean, and the favorite recreation of the children is playing about in the shallow streams. The men assert that they can all swim but are never seen doing so; they are certainly much afraid of deep water.

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clearly defined, opening northward into a large central area unclaimed by anyone.

The topography of the Epulu territory is similar to that of most other bands, though without the steep, mountainous ridges that occur slightly further east. The ground is gently undulating, as thickly forested on the hilltops as in the valleys, though the vegetation is much denser along the banks of streams and rivers. It is almost impossible to walk more than a few hundred yards without having to cross a small stream, and after a particularly violent and prolonged rainfall there are areas that become temporarily flooded and the larger streams may become uncrossable torrents. But normally there is little difficulty in traveling from one extreme of the area to another. There are no swamps, the ground is clear of the tangled undergrowth that characterizes old plantation sites, and all but the largest streams are either shallow enough, in places, to be forded or are bridged at intervals by fallen trees. Nowhere do the Mbuti need to build bridges, and nowhere do they do so except in the village context.[2] It is a simple fact that rivers that are too wide to be bridged by a fallen tree are relatively far and few between, and therefore form convenient natural boundaries. There is neither the desire nor the need to cross such rivers. A certain mistrust of large bodies of water strengthens the efficacy of rivers as boundaries, just as the few superstitions to be found among the Mbuti mostly relate to ravines, caves, streams or hills that form other boundaries.

The abundance of game and vegetable food may be taken for

[2] The famous "pygmy" bridge and the spectacular technique of crossing a river by swinging on a vine from one side to the other were taught to the Mbuti, not without difficulty, by an enterprising movie-maker. Patrick Putnam was asked to assist as interpreter, but refused. His first wife, however, went to watch the proceedings. The same group of pygmies retained some knowledge of the technique, and obligingly repeated the act for subsequent "documentary" film units. They are the only group with the knowledge, though they are now less proficient. A more recent movie-maker had to sling a wire hawser across the river and suspend the vine swing from its midpoint. A simple mathematical calculation will reveal the impossibility of the swinging technique, even disregarding the area behind the swing that would have to be cleared, a task in itself beyond Mbuti technology. Assuming the fulcrum is over one bank, and the branches into which the pygmy is to swing are directly over the far bank (a generous assumption), and assuming that the pygmy can be drawn back far enough to swing up to a 45-degree angle at the far end of his swing, the maximum width that can be crossed is three-quarters of the height of the swing. In practical experiment among the Mbuti, I found that effectively half the height of the swing was the maximum horizontal distance that could be so traversed. This would mean that to cross a river a mere hundred yards in width, the fulcrum would have to be some 600 feet up, demanding a tree approaching the height of the Eiffel Tower. Conversely, a swing of the maximum normally practicable length of 60 feet would enable a pygmy to span a stream a mere 30 feet across. Pygmies generally have rather more sense, in such matters, than movie-makers.

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It is significant that the honey season should be marked among the Mbuti by a special type of song, musically distinct from the other types, and by a ritual dance involving ritual use of fire. I have seen this dance throughout the forest, and heard the same distinctive honey song, the latter being made all the more distinct by the use of special wooden clappers called *ngbengbe* by the net-hunters of the Epulu region, *epopo* or *koko* by the archers further east.

Many different kinds of honey are recognized, and each has its own distinctive taste. All that I tasted were exceptionally sweet except for the *apuma* honey, which is very liquid and highly fermented by the time it is collected late in the season. Most honey is found high up in boles in the upper branches of the tallest trees. This is always collected by men and youths who can climb trees, unless the diameter is too great, simply by exerting lateral pressure on the trunk with their arms while they move their feet up, pulling themselves close to the trunk with a jerk as they move their arms up. If a tree is too wide to climb this way, they may loop a vine around it, holding the ends with their hands, or they may climb a smaller tree nearby and jump across where the branches meet higher up. Hollow trunks or branches are used by bees as hives.

Other honey is found a few feet above ground level, again in a hollow tree trunk, and this is the only kind of honey, except for the rare *sundu*, which is found in the ground, that a woman may collect.

The actual collecting procedure is the same. If the entrance to the hive is small, it has to be widened with an ax. Then a leaf tube in which there are smoldering embers is introduced into the hole, and by blowing through the other end, the Mbuti fills the hive with smoke and drives out the bees. Most of the bees do not sting at all, and those that do sting do not seem to cause any great pain. Even before they have all left the hive the collector puts his arm in and pulls out handfuls of honey, eating it on the spot, sharing it with friends who may be helping him. When they have had their fill they throw down what is left to those waiting below. If by themselves, they fill a special bark honey container or a basket lined with leaves, and bring the rest back to camp. There it is shared by all, either being eaten in the comb or warmed in leaf containers over the fire. If it is full of white maggots it is particularly prized, and will almost certainly be warmed to loosen the honey until the maggots wriggle, at which point it is consumed with relish.

If the honey is very dirty, full of rotten bark or leaf mold, it is wrapped in a leaf container and immersed in water. When it is pulled

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other wives, and they left without saying a word to him. As Kamaikan squatted over the fire, fanning it until it glowed red, I saw that she was pregnant, and I gathered from the look she cast after her two co-wives that her condition was the cause of some jealousy in the household.

Kenge delayed leaving, finding one excuse after another, until the sun was up. He then admitted that he had thought it silly to leave so early, when the forest was still wet and cold. He disappeared for an hour after that, and when he returned he was carrying a sleeping mat he had scrounged from a Negro (Pygmies generally sleep on leaves or sticks), a large bunch of plantains, and a cake of scented soap. He decided he could not carry my bundle as well as these things, so he told me I would have to carry my own. Anyway, he said, he wanted to leave his hands as free as possible in case he saw a bird or monkey he could shoot for dinner. He pulled the string of his bow and let it go with a loud twang, shooting an arm out in the direction the arrow would have gone, pointing to a tree top where a black-and-white Colobus monkey, idly scratching its stomach, gazed down at the scene below. I heard later that Kenge considered himself above acting as a porter; he apparently thought of that as a job fit only for people of the village, not people of the forest. Any self-respecting Pygmy carries his own load and no one else's.

When the sun was above the trees and the birds were singing and the village half empty, we crossed the road and walked through the Negro settlement, stopping for a quick last drink of palm wine, for no such luxuries are to be had in the forest. There were six of us in all: five Pygmy youths and myself.

The palm wine finished, they set off through the Negro plantations at such a pace that I almost had to run to keep up. At the edge of the plantations the forest was thick and matted, and the path entering it was narrow. The ground was still rough where saplings had been hacked off just above ground level, and on either side was

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

a tangle of fallen trees and ever-spreading vines and creepers. Here and there where the *fito*—the sapling used by villagers for building their houses—had once grown, the tangle was even worse. Once the forest is cut it grows up again, not as the mighty primeval forest it was, but as a jungle of secondary vegetation that in places is almost impenetrable. We went in single file, for the most part following a path; when we left it the youths in front flashed their hatchets above their heads, slashing away overhanging branches and vines without even slowing up, to make it easier for us to follow. But where they cut they left sharp jagged ends sticking out at just about eye-level for me. When newly cut these dangerous points are plainly visible and easy to avoid, but when they become old and dirty they are a real menace.

After about half an hour we reached the place where the more ambitious Pygmies had tried to make a plantation; this was the farthest point from the new village of Epulu that the Negroes had reached when searching for the wood to build their houses. Beyond this they did not care to venture, except for an occasional one such as Kaweki, who made his living by trapping fish in the forest streams, and those who came to help him or to carry his fish to the market. Beyond this point, in Negro eyes, the forest was evil—full of animals, malevolent spirits, and Pygmies.

But for the people of the forest the world began at this point. There was a stream nearby, just beyond the "plantation," near a site where I had recorded the forest songs of these same Pygmies * three years earlier. In this stream, for no obvious reason, each of the five youths washed carefully, as though literally ridding their very feet of the dust of the village. Then they splashed through the cool, clear water and set off again with even greater vigor than before,

* Folkways Records FE 4457, Pygmies of the Ituri Forest
FE 4483, Music of the Ituri Forest

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singing snatches of songs and shouting back and forth to one another about all the animals they were going to kill and eat.

Occasionally we heard an echo of our own voices coming back from the depths of the forest. Then we stopped, and one by one the young men shouted bold phrases to imaginary maidens, holding their noses and mouths, ready to stifle the shriek of laughter that would come when the same rude challenge was shouted back at them. They clapped one another on the back and held onto one another for support as they laughed, inventing all sorts of things they would do and say to any girl who answered them in such a way. The Pygmy is not in the least self-conscious about showing his emotions; he likes to laugh until tears come to his eyes and he is too weak to stand. He then sits down or lies on the ground and laughs still louder.

As we went on the forest became more spacious, and it seemed lighter, although the trees still met high overhead and shut out all direct sunlight. There was no need to worry about overhanging branches now, for here the forest was virgin, untouched by the sacrilegious hand of the village cultivator, and clear of heavy undergrowth. The ground was soft underfoot, carpeted with leaves that sometimes concealed a projecting root. But the pygmies knew where every obstacle was, even though they could not see it, and they picked up their feet to avoid tripping.

On all sides we could see for twenty or thirty yards. The giant trunks of the old trees were surrounded by slender, branchless saplings, all so far apart that we could wander off the path freely at almost any point. Here and there the main path was crossed by a smaller path made by some animal, and Kenge frequently turned off and followed the animal trail, beckoning me to follow. A few minutes later he would stop and sit down on his bundle, and then when the rest appeared along the main path he would jump to his feet and make fun of them for "walking like the BaNgwana." The

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THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

BaNgwana are the most disliked of all the neighboring Negro tribes, and among the Pygmies they are derided particularly because of their slow, ungainly gait, and as being the least able to walk in the forest as you should be able to walk—swiftly, silently, and easily.

Kenge was full of surprises. In spite of the apparent sophistication evidenced by his attachment to Western clothes and scented soap, he still knew his way about the forest better than most Pygmies, and he certainly had a sharper eye for game. We stopped several times while he and another youth stalked carefully up to a tree where they had seen something. Each time they shot their arrows and stood poised on the balls of their feet, silent and motionless, only to relax and clap their hands in disgust and shake their heads as they explained to each other why they had missed. And each time all I could see of the bird or monkey was a shaking of the branches as it fled in fright.

After about two hours we came to Apa Kadiketu—the Camp of Kadiketu. Nobody was sure who or what Kadiketu was, but that was what the spot had always been called. This was where I had first lived in a Pygmy camp, and it was strange to pass through the same place now. There was not a sign of a hut; just the faintest outline of what had been a campsite and a slight tangle of undergrowth showing that some clearing had once been done. Kadiketu was not quite halfway to the Lelo River, and we stopped there for a few minutes to have a smoke.

But even while we were resting, squatting on our bundles, Kenge and his friends were looking around. Before we left they made a quick foraging expedition and returned in as much time as it took me to hitch up my bundle and try to find some way of fastening the tump line so that it relieved my aching shoulders. A typewriter and a load of paper and notebooks wrapped up inside a thick blanket made the load awkward and heavy. Each of my companions had handfuls of mushrooms, great fluffy pink things, fresh and firm.

222 [482] Tearing large leaves from the undergrowth they made small bundles and hitched them[2] to their belts, using the stems of the leaves for twine.

481 484 [222] [482] Not much farther on we heard loud singing ahead of us, and we came up behind the women who had started early. They had also been gathering mushrooms, but they had larger bundles, and the small children were carrying them in their arms. Unlike the men, the women ambled along slowly, sometimes chatting, sometimes singing. This was not simply because they were happy to be back in the forest, but because by going slowly they could keep an eye open for edible roots and fruits, and by singing and chatting loudly they scared away any of the animals that might otherwise have been [136] startled into attack. There are few dangers in the forest, but there are plenty of buffalo and leopard that would attack without question if you came on them unawares. Even two Pygmies (and they never travel singly if they can help it) will shout and clap their hands as they walk along the forest trails in single file. The only time they are silent is when actually hunting.

372 484 We passed the women and children, and shortly afterward we passed a second group, those who had left before dawn. They were still sitting around the fires they had built to cook themselves a meal. Every woman, when moving camp, carries with her a burning ember wrapped heavily in fire-resistant leaves. None of these Pygmies knows how to make fire. The first thing they do when they stop on the trail for a rest is to unwrap the ember and, putting some dry twigs around it, blow softly once or twice and transform it into a blazing fire. I have never learned what the knack is. Many a time I have been blowing and fanning my fire, trying to get it to come up, when a little slip of a girl, or a boy almost too young to walk, has come along, knelt down, and given two little puffs that have sent the flames leaping upward. It is damp and cool in the forest, and at any time of the day it is pleasant to sit around the fire; but at

[2] [i.e., bundles of mushrooms, - Analyst]

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behind Manyalibo's chosen site. Almost immediately there was a shout from Njobo, and Kenge bounded across the camp, picking up a hunting net as he went. Not more than fifty yards away we found Njobo standing, tense, at the end of a fallen tree, peering inside the hollow trunk. Masisi and Manyalibo came running up through the glade, and taking the net they quickly put it up around the tree trunk, while Njobo hurried off and returned with his spear.

Looking into the black, gaping hole I saw two eyes, glowing bright red and unblinking, staring at me from the darkness. Njobo had seen a *sondu*, a highly coveted kind of antelope, and had cornered it in a sharp bend of the river so that it had been forced to take refuge in the tree trunk, trapping itself. All this had taken place so silently that only Kenge's sharp ears had picked up the noises. When the net was firmly fixed Manyalibo stood on the tree trunk and thrust a long stick inside, keeping himself well clear of the opening. The forest antelopes have small but sharp horns, and when trapped they are vicious and dangerous. The sondu, snuffling with anger and pain, came bolting out so fast that it tore the mesh of the net. It lay there struggling and bleating, but only for an instant. All three hunters were on top of it, and two of them held it down while Njobo cut its throat with the blade of his spear. He looked up at me happily and said, "This is going to be a good camp, for the forest has given us meat before we have even built our houses."

Within another fifteen minutes the first of the women arrived. They had heard the thunder and had hurried, traveling (as they can when they want to) as fast as any man, in spite of the loads on their backs and the children on their hips. They were singing as they strode into the camp with long, graceful steps, and, just as the men had done, each cast a quick look around and chose a spot where she would build a house for her family. Njobo's wife, pretty young Masamba, was among them. She went to where Njobo had put his net, threw down the load from her back, and without stopping

for a rest took out her knife and went off to cut the branches and leaves needed to built their new home. Njobo shouted after her that she should get enough to build my house as well, saying that we would help her by collecting more leaves. He called to Masisi and Kenge, and I followed the three of them, wading across the Lelo and into the forest beyond.

The afternoon was already half spent, and by the light we could tell that the sky was clouding over. Njobo knew where there was a large patch of mongongo leaves. It was some distance off, but if we hurried we could get there and collect enough for all of us, he said, looking at me doubtfully. Kenge, ever practical, replied that I had long legs, so surely I would be able to keep up with them, and I would be useful as I could carry twice as many leaves as all of them put together. I did keep up, but only just. Because of the time and the approaching rain they followed small antelope trails instead of the larger buffalo trails, and in this way kept to a more direct route. But even they had to stoop as they ran along, and as they did not bother to cut the branches above their heads I had to go practically on hands and knees in places. Kenge was in front of me, and every now and then he warned me by a gesture of a thorny vine, so thorny that if you run into it unawares it can tear your skin to shreds.

We ran for half an hour without stopping, arriving at a thick growth of mongongo which stretched along the hillside for half a mile or more, down to the banks of the stream below. It was like a forest within a forest, the giant stems ending in the large heart-shaped leaves above our heads.

For a whole hour we cut leaves, working quickly and silently, cutting each leaf with a knife in the right hand, leaving a stalk about four inches long, and adding it to a bundle in the left hand. The others had to bend the plants down to reach the leaves, but even so they quickly accumulated small bundles. When they could hold no more in their hands they simply put the leaves down on the ground

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was. He told me it was the *kumamolimo*, "the place of the molimo," and now that everyone was here we were going to start the festival. The food that had been collected from hut to hut was to feed the molimo, because the molimo was a hungry animal that ate a great deal. He added pointedly that it smoked a great deal too, and when I gave him several packets of cigarettes he solemnly put them with the food in the molimo basket.

About an hour later, when I was in my hut, I noticed that Makubasi and Ausu were standing outside, obviously wanting to say something. Usually they were not backward about interrupting, and I was puzzled when Ausu beckoned with his head that I should come outside. He whispered in my ear that a few of them were going off to get the molimos, as we were to start the festival that night. Masimongo, Kenge's brother-in-law, had said that he, as well as Manyalibo, wanted to bring out his molimo, and make it a doubly great festival. Half a dozen youths were waiting to see if I would go with them, but they told me that the place where the molimo lived was a long way off and we would have to run all the way and return when it was dark.

Of course I said I would go, and we started off immediately. But halfway across the camp Masimongo leaped into my way and shouted that I was not to go. For a moment there was a loud and sharp argument, most of which I could not follow. Finally Njobo, to whom everyone always listened, said that he had seen me in the forest and knew I could travel as well and as fast as the others, so that I would be safe. Masisi then objected with a shrill torrent of words, saying that the molimo was none of my business. For a moment I felt like saying I would not go, as I certainly did not want to cause any bad feeling. The others were already moving off at a run, down the path through the glade, not waiting for me.

Njobo pushed me on the shoulder and said to follow quickly, if I was sure I could keep up and would not be afraid of traveling in the

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765 forest in the dark. He said the others would not be able to wait for
123 me if I dropped behind; this was a serious matter. As I hesitated he
• 481 added, in a loud voice directed at everyone in general, but particularly to Masimongo and Masisi, that the molimo had already sung to me
[885] and no harm had come of it. I was after all an adult, and of the forest, so there was no reason why I should not go with the others.

He was still talking as I caught up with Makubasi, who was hanging back to see if I was coming. We jumped into the Lelo, more swollen than ever, and struggled across. The water came up to my waist, nearly up to his shoulders. My shoes filled with sand and grit, but there was no time to take them off. As we made our way through the water the others ducked their heads and washed themselves, and I did the same.

When we climbed out on the far side, Ausu, leading, was halfway up the hill while I was still splashing around trying to find a foothold in the slippery bank. The forest was not dark yet, but it was
[487] very silent, and for once no one made a sound as we ran, following the antelope trails, toward the north.

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4

The Song of the Forest

THE TRAILS WE FOLLOWED were narrow, and in places even the Pygmies had to stoop and bend. We ran at a steady pace without slowing up once. There was never any hesitating as to direction, even though there were times when it was difficult to see any trail at all. When we climbed upward we went faster because that made it easier to keep a footing. I was the only one whose feet made any noise; the others ran so lightly that they barely touched the ground but rather seemed to skim along just above it, like sylvan sprites.

After about forty-five minutes we came to a stream that was larger than the others we had crossed, though it was only a few yards wide

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and very shallow. For the first time we slowed to a walk and stepped through the bubbling water, lifting our feet high so as not to splash. The forest was silent now, except for the evening chorus of crickets and frogs, and on the far side of the stream we halted while Ausu and Makubasi looked around and listened, to reassure themselves that we were alone.

I had no idea of how far we had come or in what direction, but I knew we had left the camp far behind. It was the first time I had known a group of Pygmies to be so silent. Normally, unless hunting, they are deliberately noisy, but now, just at the time that leopards would be prowling about in search of food, they seemed unwilling to disturb the forest or the animals it concealed. Just the opposite, in fact. It was as if they were a part of the silence and the darkness of the forest itself and were only fearful lest any sound might betray their presence to some person or thing *not* of the forest.

They stood there, quiet and still, and it struck me with a sudden shock that not one of them carried a spear or bow and arrow. As they peered into the dusk and cocked their heads first on this side then on that, satisfying themselves that we were really alone, it seemed that they felt themselves so much a part of the forest and of all the living things in it that they had no need to fear anything except that which was not of the forest. One of them said to me, later, "When we are the Children of the Forest, what need have we to be afraid of it? We are only afraid of that which is outside the forest."

We stood there, water from the stream still running down our legs, until they were satisfied that all was well. Then Makubasi nodded to Madyadya and to another boy. They ran on ahead, and after a whispered discussion two others followed. The rest of us walked slowly on until we came to a small clearing nearby, the far side of which was only just visible as the last glimmer of daylight dwindled away into blackness. We stood there waiting, saying nothing. Ausu and

managed to find enough breath to blow a long blast that was sometimes musical, but more often not. The younger Pygmies all seemed anxious to have a turn, but Ausu, who was the only one who really knew how to play, kept aloof. He ran ahead of us all, silently, into the night.

It was so dark along the trails that I had to run barely two feet behind whoever was in front, occasionally reaching out and touching him to make sure he was still there. I had learned to lift my feet high to avoid roots, but I did not know the trails inch by inch, as the Pygmies did, and once I put my foot in an animal hole and fell. But nobody stopped, and I had to run all the faster to catch up.

Only at the streams was there enough light for us to see each other dimly; and at each stream I looked at those two drainpipes being lovingly washed and fed with water. I was curious as to how far this was a ritual act, and how far it was originally a practical measure that would make a wooden trumpet swell, closing any possible cracks, so that it would sound better. Ausu said that of course that was why they did it, they did the same thing to all their wooden whistles and flutes as well; it made their voices stronger. Then he added casually, "We know it makes no difference to the sound of the metal trumpet, but we do it anyway."

When we reached the top of the hill that descends, gently at first, then steeply, into the Lelo River, we all halted and stood in the glade. It was lit with silvery patches of light, shining here and there uncertainly, where the moonlight found its way down through the rustling trees. Even the darker shadows glowed every now and then, but with a strange natural luminosity that came from the mushroom-shaped nests of the termites. We could hear the Lelo swishing below, and on the far side of the river voices from the camp floated lazily across to us, as though we were gods and they were mortals, infinitely far away.

We stood there for a moment. Then Ausu took the end of the

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pulled across the entrances to the little huts, and only the men were left outside.

Njobo was there to greet us, and the first thing he asked was whether I had been able to keep up with the others, or if I had "walked like the BaNgwana." He then turned to the others with an obvious "I told you so" air and said, "You see, it is all right; he knows how to walk." This apparently slight compliment was in fact a very real one, because to the Pygmy it is one of the most important differences between the people of the forest and the people of the village that the latter do *not* know "how to walk." Walking, to the Pygmy, means being able to run swiftly and silently, without slipping, tripping or falling. Every day he depends for his food on his ability to "walk," and more than once his life will be saved by the same ability, when he has to run from a charging buffalo or creep away unnoticed from a sleeping leopard.

Masisi, unbelieving, asked if I had not fallen at least once, and when he was told I had, he roared with laughter. Masimongo, who had been another to object to my going, pointed to my torn clothes, dripping with water and perspiration, and filthy where I had fallen, and he too laughed. Nobody mentioned the molimo.

Kenge came up and asked disapprovingly why I had gone off so quickly without telling him. He said he had cooked dinner and now it was all cold and I would have to go without. He gave my clothes a withering look and said he would wash them out the next day, and that I had better take them off now and get dry. I went over to my hut and changed, and when I came out he had a piping hot meal waiting by a blazing fire.

What followed that evening was to follow every evening for the next two months. It was the focal point of the molimo festival, and the repetition every night was an essential part of it. The ceremony, if you can call it that, did not center around ritual objects, as do the

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no longer worried me that the trumpet was a metal drainpipe instead of a piece of bamboo or wood, because now that I could not see it I realized that Ausu was right. It was the sound that mattered. As the men sang in the camp, the voice of the molimo echoed their song, moving about continually so that it seemed to be everywhere at once. During a lull in the singing it started giving animal growls, and the men looked around to make sure that all the women were safely in their huts. Almost immediately Amabosu and Madyadya came running into the camp from the far end, past Cephu's camp, picking their feet up high in the air so that more than ever they seemed to be floating above the ground they trod. They came right up to the fire and squatted down either side of it, the front of the trumpet still held on Madyadya's shoulder as Amabosu warbled softly into the other end.

I noticed that the trumpet was still wet; it must have been given a "drink" just before it was carried into the camp. Now both youths stood up, and with Amabosu singing all the time, in reply to the song of the men, Madyadya took the end of the trumpet in his hands and waved it up and down, passing it through the flames of the molimo fire and over the heads of all of us sitting there. Some of the men took up hot ashes and rubbed them over the trumpet, and some even put live coals in at the far end. As Amabosu sang harder and louder, sparks flew out over Madyadya's shoulder, disappearing into the night with the song.

Then the two of them went dancing off, around the camp once and into the forest. There were a few last defiant bellows from the direction of the river, and no more was heard. The men stopped singing and prepared to eat. Two caldrons had been boiling over the fire, and both were now ready. One contained rice, the other a kind of spinach made from the leaves of the manioc plant. Eaten together they are delicious. I wondered if there would be any precedence as to who should eat first, or if there would be any ritual, but there

was given special recognition by Moke, who offered him his chair and then sat on the ground beside him. Old Tungana seemed to know him well too. The elders—the *mangese*, the Great Ones—formed a tight cluster of their own, apart from the hunters. The hunters formed their own group, and the youths theirs. The youths and a few of the hunters danced, and we were surrounded by women and girls who watched and joined the songs with handclaps. The girls formed their own dance circles, but they seemed to be dancing with much more purpose than on other nights, and they were allowed to stay up much later. Then they were sent to bed, and the singing began in earnest. All the girls who had danced went into Kondabate's hut, and as they opened the leaf door to enter I saw that the old woman was sitting inside, hunched up over the fire, her eyes as bright as the coals, wide and unblinking.

The singing went on particularly late that night, and it was only an hour after Moke's usual statement that he was tired that we were awakened by the blasting of both molimo trumpets as they entered the camp. I got up hurriedly and saw that Kenge was already gone. At the door of my hut someone ran up in the dusk and pushed me back, telling me not to come out, it was too dangerous. Just as he said this, there was a tremendous blow on top of the hut, and the molimo swept by. It was surrounded by at least twenty youths, all, as far as I could see, carrying long branches with which they beat on the roofs and walls of every hut. They continued this for an hour, the trumpets blaring angrily, the youths making loud hunting cries. As the forest grew lighter I could see that all the youths were decorated with leafy branches stuck in their belts, so that it looked as though each trumpet was surrounded by a little forest of its own.

Quite a number of huts had been damaged, but there was no word of protest. Ekianga danced up and down with a spear under each arm and ran rings around the trumpets. I was more impressed than ever by the high-stepping gait that he and everyone else used. They did

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1982 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

765 not simply run; they seemed to float over the ground at tremendous
535 speed, their feet high in the air. I saw why I had been told not to
• 481 come out, because the youths that were armed with sticks and branches on the flanks of the trumpets kept on lashing out viciously, at imaginary intruders. When Ekianga, or any of the others who were running about independently, beating on roof tops and tearing off leaves, came too close, they had to leap from side to side to avoid being hit. Each person seemed concerned only with what he was doing. Nobody so much as looked at anyone else.

765 Then the rest of the men came out of their huts, one by one,
533 went over to the kumamolimo and began singing. It was no tenta-
392 tive, sleepy sing-song, as it was on many mornings, but singing in real earnest, as loud and as vigorous as at the height of the night. The molimo fire was fanned up into a blaze, and youths ran swiftly around the camp picking up bits of wood from everywhere, dancing back to the kumamolimo and throwing them onto the fire. Then, with a wild rush, the two trumpets joined together and were surrounded by a single dancing forest, and sounding a martial air they tramped around the edge of the fire and disappeared into the trees. They seemed to cross the river and climb up the hill on the far side, until the sound of our own voices drowned the more distant music of the trumpets.

765 For the whole of that day everyone's nerves seemed to be on edge.
152 Asofalinda was in a rage about something and she strode up and down the length of the camp, shaking her arm and pointing at everyone in turn, telling them they were all lazy good-for-nothings. Masisi was in one of his worst tempers and lashed out with an acid tongue at anyone foolish enough to try and talk to him. Manyalibo sulked and said it was pretty poor that it should be so difficult to fill one molimo basket. There should be two, three, or even four baskets, and they should be full all the time, he said. He made some remark about Masamba's not having done much to help, so Masamba threw

3: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

After some persuasion he agreed to allow me to come out to his fishing camp. He was known to dislike and actively discourage visitors, so I was not surprised when he was vague as to the camp's whereabouts, merely saying that his friends would bring me there the following week. His "friends" turned out to be Kelemoke and Hari, a young Pygmy who was a cousin of Kenge, from a village the far side of Ngoma's. The four of us set off before dawn one morning.

Even when a whole camp is on the move, men, women and children, the pace of the Pygmy is swift. But when there are just two or three active young hunters they maintain a steady trot for however far they have to go. I found myself running to keep up, and we only stopped twice during the entire journey. The first time was when we were not far from the Lelo River. We rested among the ruins of an old deserted camp, and we each ate a banana and smoked a cigarette. The second time was shortly after midday, when we met Moke and another on their way back from Kaweki's camp. They were surprised that we had come so far; they themselves intended to stop over in one of the old camps for the night. Each of them carried a smoldering ember wrapped in a leaf, in one hand, and a bow and bunch of arrows in the other.

They warned us that Kaweki was not well, and said that it was the *dawa nde BaNgwana*—the magic of the BaNgwana. This made Kenge, Hari and Kelemoke all cluck their tongues, because the *dawa* of the BaNgwana is the most powerful of all. Hari said that he had heard that Musafili was jealous because Kaweki was making so much money with his fish. Kenge, however, said that he thought it was Kaweki's own people, the BaBira of Babama village. They were offended, he said, that Kaweki should live in the forest with the BaMbuti instead of in his own village. They suspected him of being in league with the evil spirits of the forest. Kelemoke nodded and said yes, it was true that Kaweki fell ill every time he returned to the village, and that it must be the strongest kind of witchcraft to reach

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

had one of our most fruitful treks of all, learning many new and important things about the forest people.

The terrain was very different from that of Epulu, being mountainous and rocky, with jagged boulders sticking out of the ground at crazy angles as though some great city had once been swallowed by an earthquake. But even on the steepest escarpments, where the huge trees seemed to grow out of the very rocks, the Pygmies moved as quickly and surely and silently as elsewhere. For the first time I saw Kenge in difficulty, he being as unused to this kind of mountaineering as I was. But we were anxious to press inward as far as we could, and once again we found ourselves almost back at the Epulu; it lay about two days to the southwest at most.

While we were in this part of the forest we heard many stories of the old wars between the various tribes of villagers, as they invaded the forest, and how the Pygmies got caught between them so that they were forced to side with one group or another.

On leaving Nduye we continued southward, past the administrative center of Mambasa, and when we had crossed the Ituri, which at this higher point was, in Kenge's words, "a mere child," we once more left the car and began walking. At the end of a day, having passed through three deserted Pygmy villages, we were beginning to feel dubious at the wisdom of having come so far without a guide when we came to the banks of a large tributary of the Ituri. There, to our mutual surprise, was one of the legendary vine bridges, slung high up over the swirling waters, suspended by lianas fastened to the topmost branches of the trees on either bank. I was glad that Kenge was amazed, because there is every reason to believe that these bridges, contrary to the information supplied by romantically minded movie-makers, are not of Pygmy origin. To cross the bridge we climbed up a series of logs leading to a fork in the tree to which our end of the bridge was anchored, and from there we made our swaying way across. Kenge refused to look down, and when I stopped in the

pull herself over to the swing, slowly and painfully, and hoist herself almost upright by catching onto the vine with her hands, using what strength she had left in her good leg, which was fast withering through lack of use. It suddenly occurred to me to ask Kenge why Pygmies never made crutches. He said that they either got better with the use of a stick, or else they just crawled until they died. "What good is anyone who can't walk?" he asked.

I went to Asofalinda and asked her if she would let me try to teach Lizabeti to walk on crutches. The old woman was in one of her most truculent moods and severely said no. The white doctor had tried once, and Lizabeti had only got worse. Besides, the one leg was completely disjointed now, she said, and the other would be equally useless soon. I tried to explain that I was not going to try to cure the girl but just to help her get around more easily. Asofalinda asked me what crutches were like, but then she immediately became severe again and said that everyone knew it was impossible to walk on one leg.

I went off into the forest with Kenge and we cut two pairs of crutches, carefully choosing sticks with a wide fork that would not pinch under the arm. Then we cut a third pair, the right size for Lizabeti. We padded the forks with leaves. I showed Kenge how to use them, holding one leg doubled up behind me. He was delighted and was soon swinging himself unsteadily over the ground. When I thought that we both had had enough practice we returned to the camp and showed the sticks to Asofalinda, explaining them to her. We then performed, circling the camp twice without mishap. By this time the children were shrieking encouragement, and parents came running to see what the noise was all about. We performed once again for Masisi. When Asofalinda still hesitated Masisi simply went into her hut, grabbed the terrified Lizabeti and carried her outside. He told Asofalinda that this was not medicine, it was just common

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

734 sense, and she must not refuse. Did she want her child to die like
• 481 other cripples who had been unable to fend for themselves?
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Reluctantly she agreed, but Lizabeti, as soon as I reached for her, burst into tears and dragged herself back into the farthest corner of her mother's hut. Masisi started to go in after her again, but Kenge called to him to leave her alone, and handed his crutches and those we had made for Lizabeti to the eagerly waiting children. Soon it was the most popular game in the camp. Even Masisi and Maipe tried "walking on one leg." I saw Lizabeti's tear-stained face peering from the door of her hut to watch.

The next morning Asofalinda came over to me and said that Lizabeti wanted to try this new game, but if she fell once she would never be allowed to try again. Not a soul left the camp that morning; they all wanted to see what would happen. Between us Kenge and I lifted the girl, who was bravely trying not to cry, and put the crutches under her arms. We showed her how to hold them with her hands at the sides, and how to take the weight off her good leg and swing it backward and forward. The greatest difficulty was getting her to trust that leg enough to move her crutches on in front of her. But little by little, moving one crutch at a time, she got more confidence. I went in front to catch her if she fell, and Kenge held her lightly around the waist from behind. Lizabeti began to walk. Kenge let go, and then, as she realized that Kenge was not even holding her, that she was actually walking upright, like the other children she had watched from the ground all her life, her face became contorted with fear and she stumbled. Kenge caught her just in time. He swung her high into the air with a triumphant shout to drown her wails of terror, and all the children joined in, laughing and chanting their congratulations.

734 We had almost completed a circle of the camp, and I looked over
481 to see if Asofalinda had noticed Lizabeti start to fall. I was just in time
123 to see her bury her face in her hands, her whole body shaking as she
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3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

sobbed her heart out—probably for the first time in her wonderful, hard-bitten old life.

The days that followed were full of happiness for everyone. Once Lizabeti got over her fright I made her practice regularly, to give her more strength in her good leg. She was soon able to stand up by herself, using the crutches for a lever. Not once did she fall. And the other children cut themselves crutches so that they could join in the fun, and together they found a new world of delight. When I was not coaxing Lizabeti to use her crutches more and more, someone else was, for everyone was anxious to see her fly over the ground just like Kenge, who by now was a master acrobat on his crutches, from which he refused to be parted.

In other respects, however, the camp became less pleasant, at any rate for me. The bees began to come in droves after their stolen honey. All day long they buzzed angrily around, so that we kept smoky fires in our huts night and day.

Almost every hour someone returned from a secret forage, with leaf bundles tied to his belt, dripping the sticky liquid down his legs. Sometimes it was too liquefied to be eaten, and then the whole bundle was simply dipped into a bowl of clear forest water, making a sweet-tasting drink. But far more popular was the whole comb which could be eaten grubs, larvae, bees and all. If it was very hard, it was first softened over the fire, and this made the grubs squirm more actively so that the honey worked its own way down your throat. It was, however, the best-tasting honey of all, despite the insects.

Apuma was yet another kind of honey, which came later in the season. It was full of grubs too, but they were all dead, and the honey had fermented. It was made by a different kind of bee and tasted like a bitter liqueur; if eaten in any quantity it could be highly intoxicating. But the Pygmy needs no stimulant in the honey season. He is drunk with the forest, with its beauty and abundance, and with the love it showers on its people. Every night that tiny

4: Putnam E-5 (no date) 1948 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

which occurred during its period of isolation. This not only forms a strong bond between the pygmies and their hosts but it gives them a formal sequence of age grades in their own society. There are no special scarifications or other insignia for each class; it is a common experience to hear one person asking another, when strangers meet, "What class were you in? I am a Hurricane," and so forth, just like Harvard alumni asking each other what class they were in, and whom they knew, over a drink.

Pygmy Locomotion

The pygmies are very expert at getting about through the forest and especially at moving swiftly through the thick undergrowth that a white man would have to chop down with a machete before he could enter. To a Negro, a white man trying to get through seems clumsy. To a pygmy a Negro seems clumsy. Schebesta observes that the small size of the pygmies makes them better adapted to locomotion in the forest than the larger Negroes and whites.[1]

The pygmies jump over fallen logs, and make their way using hands and feet—hands to toss dead branches and trunks aside. They can actually run through this tangle, and while so doing they sometimes pick up fallen logs and throw them so they will crash at a distance, to mislead pursuers, or game which they are stalking.

They are also very expert at climbing; the children practice this from babyhood. Their technique is far from simian, but a widely distributed method, similar in principle to that of a lumberjack. The climber cuts two

[1] Schebesta, P., *Revisiting My Pygmy Hosts*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1936, pp. 78-79.

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481 lengths of 20 feet or so each from some flexible liana, and passes the first around the tree trunk, which may be as much as six feet thick. Then he sets the second liana in place in the same manner, and passes the two under his shoulders. He sits parallel to the trunk, which he faces, and grips with his feet. While bracing against one liana, he moves the other upward, then braces on it while moving the other. In this way he can climb up the slick, limbless bole of the tree, to where the first limbs branch off, some hundred or more feet above the ground.

When he reaches the first branches, he takes off his lianas and walks along the limbs like a tightrope walker or structural steel worker, free of the limbs, with nothing to hold in his hands. When he has accomplished his mission he comes down again the way he went up.

Pygmy Technology

412 197 439 **Basic tools.**—The keynote to the simple and specialized pygmy technology is the fact that they do not have to make any of their basic tools, but instead obtain effective iron cutting tools from their Negro hosts. This eliminates much work and the need for much skill in toolmaking, and provides them with more efficient instruments than they could possibly make for themselves at a food-gathering level of technology.

When a pygmy needs an ax he will beg one from his Negro host. Perhaps the Negro will give him a whole ax, haft and all. The blade is a triangular piece of iron, made locally by Negro smiths, and set in a solid wooden handle, adzed out of a larger piece of wood. The handle has a hole which has been burned through it from side to side with a hot iron. Through this

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224 Although between themselves the pyg-
433 mies have little division of labor, in another sense they are all specialists in hunting, and the division of labor is between them and the Negroes. In this sense the pygmies form an ethnic caste, a genetically and occupationally segregated segment of a larger economic entity.

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Z This does not mean that the Negro does no hunting. However, the pygmy
224 spends all of his time hunting, the
433 Negro only a portion of his. The pyg-
• [481] my depends largely on his ability to move noiselessly and swiftly about the forest, and to climb trees. The Negro depends on his greater patience and mechanical ingenuity, for he hunts largely by means of elaborate traps, deadfalls, pits, weighted spears dangled over elephant paths, and other deadly devices. The pygmy could never be induced to dig a pit; it is too much work, takes too long, and takes too much concentration and persistence. Nor do they ever use traps.

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224 Throughout the pygmy country, the
[101] pygmies can be classified either as net hunters or non-net hunters, depending on whether they habitually practice big community hunts, driving animals into nets, or depend entirely on individual stalking as a means of securing game. They may also be classified by whether or not they use bows and arrows. In both net hunting and the use of the bow and arrow, the pygmies follow the lead of the Negroes among whom they live. Where the Negroes have nets, the pygmies have nets; where the Negroes have bows, the pygmies have bows. This is easily understood, since the Negroes make both the nets and the arrowheads. Presumably, the bowless pygmies are net hunters, for otherwise they could not live.

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[621] Whether the pygmies in a group are net hunters or bowmen or both makes a considerable difference in the rest of

[P. 328-A]

224 have little game they will keep on until nearly dark.

There is a difference in value between net positions in a net hunt. The central position is best because it catches the most animals, and the flanks are the worst. The pygmies have a whole vocabulary to express the details of net hunting, including a whole group of verbs for net setting in various positions. There seems to be some rule about who sets his nets in which spot, but this has not been recorded.

[192 193]

If a big animal, like a buffalo, comes toward the nets, the men will try to get them down and let him rush through, for they do not want to foul and tear the nets or to encounter the dangerous animal. If the large animal does strike the net, however, it may delay him long enough for the nearest man to rush up and spear him.

Most of the animals they catch are no larger than a dog or goat; for example, a kuchinda is about that size. The hunter cuts its throat and carries it around his neck, with hind and front legs on opposite sides. The average day's bag is about half of an animal of this size per man. If they have caught an okapi, however, the hunter cuts it up on the spot, and they cut small lianas to tie up the pieces with. The women also will carry some of it in their baskets. Almost always the meat goes directly to the camp after a hunt, where it is divided. Only after this will the share of the Negroes be carried to their village.

[481] **Bow and arrow hunting.**—In bow and arrow hunting, the pygmy relies not on his endurance but on his ability to move through the forest silently; that is his greatest skill and greatest asset. He can track an antelope to a thicket where it has lain down to sleep, and shoot it from five yards' distance before it wakes up. He shoots machine-gun style; he will pump five ar-

[P. 329-B]